

**International Relations (PLS 232)**  
Monday, Wednesday, & Friday 9:05–9:55am  
Strong Hall 0300

**Instructor Contact Information**

**Instructor:** Assistant Professor Michael Masterson

**Email:** mmasterson@missouristate.edu

**Office hours:** Wednesday and Thursday from 1:30–4 and by appointment.

My office is in Strong Hall 330, and you should feel free to come in during office hours without an appointment. When scheduling a meeting outside of my office hours, please strive to contact me at least 2 days in advance. I will do my best to respond to emails by the end of the business day. There is no guarantee of a response to emails sent during non-business hours until the next business day.

**Course Overview**

Whether through international conflict, trade, or investment, international events strongly affect our lives. This makes understanding them critical to being an informed citizen. Further, the globalization of investment flows, trade, and supply chains make the ability to think systematically about international affairs a valuable skill. This course will introduce the main theories international relations scholars have come up with to explain important global phenomenon including: international conflict, trade, investment, environmental cooperation, and human rights.

Since discussion is an important component of this course, it is essential that students complete the readings for each session and participate actively and consistently in class discussions. I have intentionally structured the lectures and readings to cover related but distinct material to maximum the amount of information students will learn in the course. This means it is vital for students to both attend the lectures and do the readings.

**Assignments**

**Quizzes**

For 7 of the class sessions that fall on the last class day of the week (this is always a Friday except for Wednesday 3/27 and Wednesday May 1), I will administer an in-class pop quiz on the required readings for that week. The quizzes will have 5 multiple choice questions each. On the quizzes, you may use any handwritten notes that you have taken on the readings. However, you may not refer to the readings themselves or use a computer. A student may drop their lowest quiz grade, but there will be no makeup quizzes outside of exceptional circumstances, such as medical or family emergencies.

**Exams**

The exams will cover both the lectures and readings. However, as the quizzes focus on the readings, the exams will put more emphasis on the lectures. The midterm will be on **Friday**,

**March 8** during our normal class time, and the final exam will be on **Monday, May 6, from 8:45 am to 10:45 am** in our normal classroom. Students will need a *Blue Book Exam Booklet* (available from the University Book Store) for each exam.

### Policy Memos

- Each student will write 2 policy memos. For these papers, imagine you are writing a memo to advise a top level foreign policy maker in the US Government (for example, the Secretary of State). Your memo should briefly provide background information on the situation, describe one or more policy recommendations, and describe the advantages and disadvantages of each recommendation. You should look at the files about memo writing on Brightspace for advice about how to write your memo. The memo should have the components described in the Writing Studio Policy Memo document including: a header, an executive summary, and subheadings. Each memo should be a 2–3 double spaced pages long. Your memo should cite at least 4 high-quality sources, such as books, institute reports, or peer-reviewed articles. Each student should choose 2 of the following topics to write a memo about.
  - US policy on relations with China
  - US policy regarding global cooperation on climate change
  - US trade policy
  - US policy on the war between Russia and Ukraine

The memos should be uploaded to Brightspace as PDF documents by 11:59 PM on the day they are due. The first memo is due **March 22**, and the second is due **April 26**.

### Formatting Guidelines for all Written Assignments

Papers should have 1 inch margins. They should use a font size of 11 or 12 and one of the following fonts: Times, Calibri, Liberation Serif, Computer Modern, or Helvetica. *Bibliographies do not count towards page length requirements.* Papers should follow the [Chicago](#) author-date citation style. This requires author-date parenthetical references, indicating what source was relied on for the points you make in each part of the paper, and a full bibliography at the end. Parenthetical references should include page numbers. The file that you upload to Brightspace should be in PDF format.

The use of AI text generation tools is a form of plagiarism and is not permitted.

### Grading

- Quizzes 15%
- Participation and Attendance 20%
  - You should come to class on time and prepared to participate in discussion. However, *if you are sick and may be contagious, please do not come to class.*

Instead, seek medical attention from your doctor or at Mager's Health and Wellness Center. They can provide you a medical excuse and advise you when it is safe to return to class. Contact me to let me know that you are sick and will not be in class. We can work together to ensure you will be able to keep up with readings and assignments through the Brightspace course site.

- Midterm 15%
- Final 25%
- Memos 25%

## **Late Work Policy**

If you believe you may be late turning in an assignment because of an event, such as a medical or family emergency, then you should email me as far as possible in advance of the due date of the assignment to request an extension. Late assignments not granted an extension prior to the due date will lose 10 percentage points and an additional 10 percentage points for each day late after the first day. Assignments more than 3 days late will not be accepted, and late quizzes will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances.

## **Course Readings**

All of the readings will be posted on Brightspace. Let me know if you are unable to access the textbook through Brightspace.

## **University Policies**

Please see the [University Policy Statement Page](#) for up-to-date university policies that apply to this and all courses on the following issues: Nondiscrimination, Disability Accommodation, Title IX Policy, Lauren's Promise, Religious Accommodation, Mental Health & Stress Management, Chosen Name Policy, Suicide Prevention, Student Requirements for Technology, Academic Integrity, Cell Phone Policy, Audio/Video Recording of Course Activity, Dropping a Class, Emergency Response, and Cultural Competence Statement.

## **Campus Closure Policy**

When the university is closed due to an emergency or inclement weather situation, classes will move to remote learning. I will communicate with you over email about the precise means of remote learning, which will vary depending on what day we miss. Material used for remote learning will be posted on Brightspace, and any synchronous meetings will take place on Zoom. If you are not able to participate in the remote learning activities as described (for example, due to a power outage), you should contact me as soon as you can so alternative arrangements can be made.

## **Reading Schedule**

You should aim to have the readings for each week complete by the final class day of that week when there may be a quiz.

**1/19**

Introduction (no readings for first week)

**1/26**

Textbook Ch 1 Globalization of International Relations

**2/2**

Textbook Ch 2 Realist Theories

**2/9**

Textbook Ch 3 Liberal and Social Theories

**2/16**

Textbook Ch 4 Foreign Policy

**2/23**

Class on Wed. and Fri. but not Monday this week (President's Day)

Textbook Ch 5 International Conflict

**3/1**

Textbook Ch 6 Military Force and Terrorism

**3/8**

Textbook Ch 7 International Organizations, Law, and Human Rights [on final not midterm]

**midterm exam on 3/8**

**3/15**

Spring Break

**3/22**

Textbook Ch 8 International Trade

**Policy Memo 1 Due March 22**

**Wednesday 3/27**

Class Mon. and Wed. but not Friday this week (Spring Holiday). Readings due Wednesday.

Textbook Ch 9 Global Finance and Business

**4/5**

Textbook Ch 10 International Integration

**4/12**

Textbook Ch 11 Environment and Population

**4/19**

Textbook Ch 12 The North-South Gap

**4/26**

**Policy Memo 2 Due April 26**

Textbook Ch 13 International Development

**4/29 and 5/1**

Review for final exam

**5/6 Final exam**

Monday, May 6, 8:45 am to 10:45 am